Learning Management Process about Reading for Main Idea of Thai Language Teacher: A Case Study of Thai Language Teacher in Banphue District, Udonthani Province

Krittaya Thawon [1]

[1]Nongkungvangsang school, Banphue District, Udonthani Province, Thailand

Abstract

The objective of this study is to examine Thai language teachers' learning management process on reading for main idea and its results towards students. The qualitative research using case study research methodology focused on a group of three Prathomsuksa-1 teachers from pilot schools in Ban Phue district, Udonthani; Anubarn Ban Phue Pittayapoom School; Ban Non Sawang School; and Nong Kung Wang Saeng School. The schools attended '2015: The Year of Zero Illiterate Student Project' and completed 'School Transformation: All Prathomsuksa-1 Student Must Be Literate Workshop' arranged by Office of the Basic Education Commission, Misnistry of Education. The collected data was thoroughly analyzed particularly using protocol analysis and analytic description from videos, interviews, observations on learning management and students' works on reading for main idea.

The findings revealed that the teachers planned and designed learning activities about reading for main idea for students by analyzing the Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008), adopting individual learner analysis, creating learning management plan, preparing handouts and reading exercise, and preparing learning media, student assessment form and performance assessment report. The innovations used in the learning process are Brain-Based Learning, reading texts, exercises in textbooks and Distance Learning Television by Distance Learning Foundation. The learning process involved [i] Introducing a new lesson topic with brain-exercise activities, reviewing previous lessons and informing learning objectives to students; [ii] having students read aloud words together as well as underlining important words, asking students questions about the words they have read, and having them answer questions in worksheet by writing, doing group activity and role-play; and [iii] having students hand in worksheet to assess their ability towards finding the main idea. In terms of student performance, the study found that Prathom-1 students are able to find the main idea from important reading texts.

Keywords: reading for main idea

[1] Corresponding author : medzin3@hotmail.com

Paper Instruction

Introduction

        Education plays important role in human resources development by making individuals effective, adaptable to social and environmental changes, and consistent with socioeconomic, political and cultural requirements so that they can make progress and create prosperity for Thai society as well as bringing balance and harmony in different fields of development (Prime Minister's Office, 2003).

        According to section 24 of National Education Act B.E. 2542 (1999) and Amendments (Second National Education Act B.E. 2545 (2002)), in organizing the learning process, related educational institutions and agencies must: take into account learner differences, provide content and activities that are relevant to learners' interest and ability, and create activities that enable individuals to learn from their true experiences, so that they can think practically and become eager to read and learn new things continuously. Thus, reading and literacy are necessary skills for learning and developing success. With good reading comprehension, learners can fully gain knowledge, make use of analysis thinking, and apply useful information to their lives. Moreover, they can pass on knowledge that they gain from reading to others and this kind of skill is one of important skills required in the 21st century. Therefore, reading for main idea is considered the most important basis for knowledge acquisition as it generates thinking and imagination. It is a way to primarily understand a content and a necessary basis for advanced-level reading. If students are unable to find the main idea from what they read that means they do not understand or incorrectly understand the content, even the best literatures will be no use for them. Teaching reading for main idea; therefore, is very important and teachers must provide various reading promotion activities to help leaners develop reading skill and reading habit which can be used for a lifetime (Waewmayura Mueannil, 1998).

        However, according to current educational circumstances in Thailand, reading is a national-level problem. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development reported that 37 percent of Thai students aged 15 years old have low-level reading ability. This indicates that a number of Thai students have problem with reading and the problem negatively effects their performance in other subjects. Instruction in Thailand, particularly Thai-language instruction, needs to be improved as Thai language is a national language and an essential foundation of learning.

        (Office of the Basic Education Commission of Thailand, 2009). Consequently, instructional development for Thai language is a part of important policies set by Ministry of Education of Thailand to improve students' literacy skills. The ministry set a policy that required all Educational Service Areas to declare 2015 as the year of zero illiterate student and 100 percent of Prathom-1 students must be literate after having finished Prathomsuksa 1 (Udon Thani Educational Service Area 4, 2015). Moreover, the ministry arranged a Thai-language learning management training, School Transformation: All Prathom-1 Students Must Be Literate, in accordant with Brain-Based Learning in order to provide concrete guideline for teachers in Prathomsuksa 1. Pilot schools participated in the training were required to extend results to other schools under Udon Thani Educational Service Area 4. These schools were

to report learning management results at the end of every month and submit literacy assessment results at the end of each semester. The literacy assessment results of pilot schools in Ban Phue district for the first semester of the 2015 academic year found that literacy rate for students in Nong Kung Wang Saeng School, Anubarn Ban Phue Pittayapoom School, and Ban Non Sawang School are 91.66%, 100% and 100% respectively (KPI Report system, Office of the Basic Education Commission of Thailan, 2015). Furthermore, Udon Thani Educational Service Area 4 has adopted instructional innovations for improving students' ability to read for main idea for the skill is essential for knowledge acquisition and is one of keys to learning success.

According to the principle and reasons previously mentioned, the researcher was interested in studying the learning management process on reading for main idea implemented by Thai-language teachers in Prathomsuksa 1. The participants in this study are three Thai-language teachers in Prathomsuksa 1 from three pilot schools in Ban Phue district, Udon Thani that attended '2015: The Year of Zero Illiterate Student Project' arranged by Office of the Basic Education Commission, Ministry of Education. The result of this study will be useful for synthesizing into a learning management model for teaching reading for main idea in the future.

Objectives

1) To study the learning management process on reading for main idea implemented by Thai-language teachers in Prathomsuksa 1.

2) To study how the result of the Thai-language teachers' learning management process on reading for main idea effects on student performance.

Definitions

1) **Reading for main idea** refers to reading in order to find main point, objectives and writer's concept.

2) **The learning management process on reading for main idea** refers to the process of creating learning activities related to reading for main idea conducted by Thai language teachers in Prathomsuksa 1 from the pilot schools: teaching preparation, learning activities arrangement, learning management media, measurement and evaluation.

3) **Ability to find the main idea** refers to Prathom-1 students' reading comprehension presented on the evidence indicating the students' ability of reading for main idea after learning by using the learning management process provided by Thai language teachers who participated in this research.

4) **Thai-language teachers in Prathomsuksa 1** refers to three Thai-language teachers who teach in Prathomsuksa 1 from three pilot schools in Ban Phue district, Udonthani: Anubarn Ban Phue Pittayapoom School, Ban Non Sawang School, and Nong Kung Wang Saeng School. The pilot schools attended '2015: The Year of Zero Illiterate Student Project' and completed 'School Transformation: All

Prathom-1 Students Must Be Literate Workshop' arranged by Office of the Basic Education Commission, Ministry of Education.

Research Methodology

1. Target group

The research is focused on a group of three Prathom-1 teachers from pilot schools in Ban Phue district, Udon Thani: Anubarn Ban Phue Pittayapoom School, Ban Non Sawang School, and Nong Kung Wang Saeng School. The schools attended '2015: The Year of Zero Illiterate Student Project' and completed 'The schools Transformation: All Prathom-1 Students Must Be Literate Workshop' arranged by Office of the Basic Education Commission, Ministry of Education.

2. Research Design

This research is a qualitative research using case study research methodology.

3. Research Instruments

3.1 Lesson plans related to the learning management process on reading for main idea were considered to analyze learning management process implemented by targeted Thai-language teachers.

3.2 A video camera was used for recording the learning process on reading for main idea arranged by Thai language teachers in Prathomsuksa 1 demonstrating how the learning process was organized, teachers and students' behaviors and their communication during class.

3.3 Observation form was used to record the learning management process on reading for main idea carried out by Thai language teachers in Prathomsuksa 1. The class observations were made and recorded by the researcher.

3.4 Interview form was used for interviewing Thai language teachers in Prathomsuksa 1 from three pilot schools about the learning management process on reading for main idea.

3.5 Evidences that indicate students' ability to read for main idea gained from the learning management process, for example, worksheet, written answer on answer sheet, records or any drawing from learning activity, were collected from class observation.

Data Collection

1. The researcher asked for permission to carry out class observations to collect information about the learning management process implemented by targeted Thai language teachers in Prathomsuksa 1 in the first semester of the 2015 academic year. The information acquired from the observations was primarily used in planning data collection.

2. Created data collection tools which are an observation form and an interview form for collecting information about the learning management process on reading for main idea by the targeted teachers.

3. Prepared tools and materials to be used in data collection and make an appointment for data collection with the participants.

4. Created data collection plan.

5. Collected data by studying lesson plans, recording videos, recording classroom observation, and interviewing the participants. The data collection was carried out for 3 hours for each participant. In class, teacher and students' behaviors were recorded including conversations and question answering during the session of learning activities about reading for main idea.

6. Collected evidences that indicate students' ability to read for main idea gained from the learning management process, for example, worksheet, written answer on answer sheet, records or any drawing from learning activity.

Data Analysis

The collected data was thoroughly analyzed using protocol analysis and analytic description from videos, interviews, observations on learning management and students' works related to reading for main idea.

Conclusion and Discussion

1. Conclusion

1.1 The study found that the teachers planned and designed learning activities about reading for main idea for students by analyzing the Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008), adopting individual learner analysis, creating learning management plan, preparing handouts and reading exercise, and preparing learning media, student assessment form and performance assessment report. The innovations used in the learning process are Brain-Based Learning, reading texts, exercises in textbooks and Distance Learning Television by Distance Learning Foundation. The learning process involved; [i] Introducing a new lesson topic with Brain Gym activities, reviewing previous lessons and informing learning objectives to students; [ii] having students read aloud words together and underline important words, asking students questions about the words they have read, and having them answer questions in worksheet by writing, doing group activity and role-play; and [iii] having students submit worksheet to the teachers in order to assess their ability towards finding the main idea.

A problem found during learning activities on reading for main idea using mentioned innovations is that students have literacy problem. The teachers solved the problem by organizing remedial teaching in class and doing group activities. Each group contains students of mixed-ability and more proficient students would lead the team and help their friends who have learning disabilities.

The learning media used in this study includes Integration of Reading and Calculating for Solving Mathematical Question Exercise Book for Prathomsuksa-1 students, We Can Read and Write Thai Language Textbook by Tharnpanya Publishing (2009), tales books, handouts and worksheet created by the teachers. Besides, additional media used in the study are handouts and worksheet from learning through Distance Learning Television, a large-screen television for displaying learning media from DLIT and DLTV, a whiteboard and a magnetic board, learning media created by the teachers such as flash cards, display boards, games, songs, and role-play. The teachers assessed their students' performance

by observing students' reading behaviors and question answering in class, examining students' worksheets and tests.

1.2 In terms of the result of learning management process on student performance, the study found that Prathom-1 students are able to find the main idea from important reading texts.

2. Discussion

2.1 The study found that, in creating lesson plans and designing learning activities on reading for main idea, the teachers analyzed the curriculum related to reading for main idea from the Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008), and also performed individual learner analysis on reading, writing, learning behaviors and general behaviors by using information gained from observation and previous activity assessment. This is consistent with a research by Pongpob Sukittiwong (2013) which studied proposed guidelines for organizing music instruction to develop jazz improvisation skills in Blues form for undergraduate students. The study found that, in teaching environment, instructor has set up teaching guidelines as following: 1) objective setting, 2) content design, 3) learning activities focused on developing and connecting knowledge base, 4) learning media, 5) measurement and evaluation.

2.2 The study also found that, in terms of organizing learning activities related to reading for main idea of the targeted teachers for the three pilot schools, there are similarities in the learning management process that are: preparing students for a new lesson with Brain Gym activities, revising previous lessons, introducing a new lesson by informing learning objectives to students. The practices are in accordance with Brain – based Learning that Office of the Basic Education Commission of Thailand (2015) mentioned in the third key (learning management) of the Roadmap for School Transformation: All Prathom-1 Students Must Be Literate saying that Brain Gym activities need to be done hourly to stimulate cerebellum which supports functions of cerebrum, a part of the brain that controls thinking, memory, and logic. Moreover, the study found that using rhyme words and songs as a part of learning activities has positive effect on learning which is consistent with Brain – based Learning concept. According to Brain – based Learning, before teaching language, teacher should prepare students with rhyme words reading which makes students feel their lesson is easy and fun and also encourage their brains to increasingly and continuously try to learn language for a long period of time and when they are quite ready for learning, teachers should have them move their hands or tap along with rhyme words (Ministry of Education, 2009). In addition, revising previous lessons before introducing learning process is consistent with Schema Theory that Sunanta Mansetthawit (1997) has mentioned. The theory suggested that, in or to comprehend reading text, readers need to relate their prior knowledge to the text they read. Anyhow, it can be assumed that the targeted teachers from three pilot schools have participated training in the same course; therefore, their learning management process are similar to one another.

2.3 Having students of mixed-ability do group activities and having students with better learning ability lead their groups and help friends who have learning disabilities is consistent with a research by Petchnapa Pochanukoon (2014) that studied the implementation CBI learning management

process and KWL technique and its results on ability to read for main idea and summarize reading text in Thai language of Prathom-1 students. The study found that, with the methods, students improved ability to summarize reading text.

2.4 Learning media created by the teachers can attracts students' attention in learning activities because they have beautiful pictures, appropriate character size and appropriate words. Moreover, such learning media influence students to remain in classroom and learn from the media by themselves during lunch break and before leaving class. Using such learning media is consistent with a research by Patcharaporn Yeejai (2011) which studied the effect of comic books created for improving Prathom-1 students' reading comprehension as well as a research by Benjarat Pinveha (2006) which studied the use of song as instrument for improving Prathom-1 students' ability to read for main idea. It is also relevant to a research by Maturada Thachang (2001) which studied the use of Brain-Based Learning in teaching reading for main idea and its effect on Prathom-3 students' ability to summarize reading text after learning vocabulary through pictures, answering question, sequencing event in a text and describing the event in their own words, finding main idea from a text, writing plot diagram by analyzing characters' characteristic, scenes, important events, and idea from a text. It can be concluded that learning to read for main idea through making a booklet, role-play and playing games can improve students' comprehension. Furthermore, access to such information as DLIT or DLTV is relevant to a research by Yada Sriaroon (2014) which aimed to study teachers' role on enhancing information awareness of students in Mathayom level, problems and solutions. Nevertheless, in this study, it was found that the three pilot schools did not have a problem with information access, the teachers have skills related to information learning, and the schools also provide support in terms of information technology equipment and efficient internet system. This indicates the ability of media and modern technology which positively affect students' attention and teachers' ability to teach.

2.5 In measurement and evaluation, the teachers collected information by observing how students read and answered questions in class, examining students' worksheets and tests. This consistent with two assessment approaches for reading for main idea using standard criteria to consider content proposed by Sunanta Mansetthawit (2000): 1) using test instruments and 2) using value assessment form which uses level of characters and converts them to score. The targeted teachers have used both assessment approaches.

2.6 Important factors that influence students' ability to read for main idea include teachers' concern towards students and students' attention when doing activity. Age-appropriate and interesting learning media with beautiful illustration and appropriate character size and number are also found to have positive effect on students' performance which is consistent with Patcharaporn Yeejai's study in 2011. The study examined the effect of comic books created for improving Prathom-1 students' reading comprehension and found that comic books with beautiful and colorful illustration can effectively attract children and induce them to read the books.

Suggestion

 1. Suggestion for implementation of research results

 1.1 Brain-Based Learning activities, particularly Brain-Gym activities, mentioned in the Roadmap for School Transformation: All Prathom-1 Students Must Be Literate by Office of the Basic Education Commission of Thailand (2015) can be applied to any learning activities apart from reading for main idea. Besides, using rhyme words and songs in learning activities helps encourage students to feel their lesson is easy and fun and also encourage their brains to increasingly and continuously try to learn language for a long period of time.

 1.2 In designing learning activities on reading for main idea, teachers should focus on learning media. The learning media used for teaching reading for main idea should be attractive and age-appropriate for students. For example, those with beautiful illustration and appropriate character size commonly encourage students to feel satisfied with the learning activities; therefore, they increasingly learn by themselves through the media.

 1.3 When doing group activities, students of mixed-ability would learn to cooperate with others, to lead and follow, and to kindly help their friends who have learning disabilities. Moreover, dividing students into groups when playing games generally makes students feel more confident to show their abilities and also makes the lesson more challenging and interesting.

 1.4 Teachers should allow students to answer questions by speaking or drawing pictures that convey the same meaning instead of writing if they have a problem with writing or have learning disabilities and are unable to answer the questions by writing.

 2. Suggestion for future research

 2.1 A future research should study Prathom-1 teachers' role that has influence on enhancing students' reading and writing skills.

 2.2 A further study should be conducted on learning media that influence students' ability to read and write.

 2.3 There should be a further study on teaching students with learning disabilities about reading for main idea.

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